Rural Parish in Vermon

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THE

Commonweal

Education Issue

Technics and Totalitarianism

by Frederick D. Wilhelmsen

A New Kind of Catholic School

by Sister Mary Evelyn

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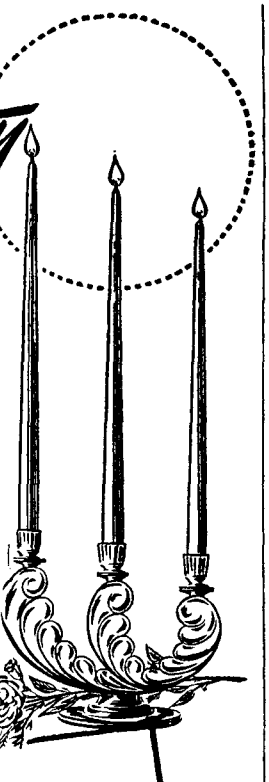

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THE

Commonweal

week by week

EDUCATION, APOSTOLATE, DEMOCRACY

IN this special education issue of The Commonweal, Sister Mary Evelyn, a teaching Religious, asks a question heard with increasing frequency: "Why do our [Catholic school] graduates as a group have so little impact on the world in which they live?"

The problem is that the graduate, once removed from the protective cloister of the college or university, enters a pluralist society which requires that his social activity, if it is to be effective, be democratic in its method, as well as Christian in its inspiration. If he cuts himself off from general society or groups together exclusively with other Catholics, he is thereby considerably limiting his influence. In that case his highest social activity (aside from the consequences of his spiritual acts) is usually limited to the negative—however necessary—scope of the pressure group.

Now, pressure-group activity is vital to a democratic society. It serves as a brake upon those who are actually determining which way society will go; it limits, circumscribes and fences in. But it would not do to exaggerate the power or the influence of the pressure groups. They do not act positively upon society, nor do they make society what it is; rather they re-act to what others have created. Except for the hopelessly embittered, chronically negativist or pitifully frustrated, a pressure-group future offers youth little Christian challenge. For most, a future of picketlines, angry letters-to-the-editor and protest-movements stretches ahead as a fairly gloomy apostolate. Young Catholics want to be part of things, working with others to make a better world, not huddling together in angry isolation, to be heard from only when some ringing condemnation is to be sounded.

To work with others means that the Catholic school graduate will have to stand side by side with many who do not share his beliefs, in some cases with those who actually despise his beliefs. It means that he will have to find some common basis of agreement with other men of good will with whom he may have profound differences. He must find some practical way of working with these people and must usually be content to reach limited goals. A limited goal is not all that one could desire, but it is all that can be practically attained in a given society at a given time. It is our impression that too many Catholic graduates, once they grow discouraged about translating the full Christian vision of society with which they leave school, either throw up their hands or retire into sulking isolation not to be aroused until there is a clarion call for a new picket line or an avalanche of protest letters.

THE basis of common action in our society, it seems to us, is provided by the very nature of that society. It is the democratic method. It may be that in all the talk about the social apostolate, too little stress has been laid on the fact that such an apostolate must be exercised within a nation which depends on this democratic method to channel its social energies. In a recent issue of the *World Alliance News Letter*, published by the Protestant Church Peace Union, William P. Clancy of The Commonweal had something to say about how men of good will could cooperate. We quote some pertinent excerpts:

"We men in the West can probably never agree on long-range prospects. We can never adopt a body of common first principles as the basis of our action. Men with religious convictions will continue to exist and to believe that freedom's only sure foundation rests in their principles, and men with scientific-humanist convictions will continue to insist that, on the contrary, true democracy is tied to *their* tradition. But these men can still cooperate because, though their ultimate goals may be radically divergent, their proximate goals may often agree, and it is here, in the practical order, that their cooperation is needed. The one thing needed is that they do not ask too much of each other. . . . We are all tempted to demand a *total* acceptance of our own view before we will cooperate with our neighbor. If we can resist this temptation, if we can be satisfied with less

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than perfection, if we can agree on methods and proximate goals without asking too deeply our neighbor's ultimate convictions, then I think cooperation in almost all matters which are pertinent to democracy's common life will be possible for men of opposing views. For the opposing views must remain, but the common life will remain too, and it is here that cooperation is needed."

The limited goals of such an apostolate, of course, do not automatically insure the triumph of Christianity—which is the goal of the social apostle—but they do make Christianity more possible. The family removed from an overcrowded slum dwelling, the Negro assured of respect for his own dignity, the worker enabled to support his family—all are more receptive to the preaching of the Gospel. And, in the last analysis, the layman's task, like that of John the Baptist, is to make straight the way.

INSULT TO INJURY?

WHEN substantial cutting of government expenditures is a watchword, the shoe is certain to pinch in a number of places. And where the economic effect of such measures is heaped upon other extreme human difficulties, existing tensions greatly increase.

There are reports of mounting resentments in the Panama Canal Zone. As a result of a million and a half dollars cut in the operating budget some two thousand Canal Zone employees have been dropped during the past year. More dismissals for economy reasons are in prospect.

Moreover, the eighty millions planned for Zone housing units this fiscal year has been cut to less than half, and the reduced sum is to be used primarily to house white workers from the United States. At the same time instruction in the Zone's non-white schools has been shifted from English to Spanish (the language of the Panamanian schools).

This is widely interpreted as preliminary to transferring the bulk of non-United States workers from the Canal Zone, where they now live, to Panama itself. The acceptability of such a solution is hardly helped by the unemployment and shortage of low-cost housing already besetting that Central American republic.

Pressures such as these are bringing long-harbored feelings of national and personal resentment to the fore. Unskilled workers of Panamanian and other extraction get as little as one-tenth the annual pay of the most skilled white technicians from the United States; they live in different areas and on a far lower scale; their children attend separate schools. But a number of them have worked, and lived with their families, in the Canal Zone for so long that they have a United States rather than a Panamanian outlook. They would now experience difficulty in adapting themselves to a Panamanian environment.

Discrimination, segregation, unemployment and other explosive factors are involved in the growing tension in this small area so vital to the United States in peace and war. Self-interest alone would call for a review of our present and threatened policies. When Senora de Remon, wife of the President of Panama, recently told the Inter-American parley at Caracas that our policy of discrimination in the Canal Zone was fomenting Communism there, she made an understandingly profound impression among the delegates from this hemisphere.

NEXT WEEK

CHESTER BOWLES examines the New Look in foreign and defense policy.

"The new strategy of increased reliance on the atomic bomb encourages a 'go-it-alone' attitude on our part and alienates our friends and allies from us. It may lead us to the chilly isolation of Mr. Hoover's 'fortress America'; it is remarkably similar to the strategic concepts of Mr. Taft. Both these courses were supposedly rejected by the American people and by both political parties as recently as their 1952 conventions. Instead of giving us 'more security at less cost,' the new policy, even in strategic terms, seems to give less security at the cost of damaging the vital unity of the non-Communist world so painfully constructed during the last ten years. . . ."

A BISHOP SPEAKS OUT

MANY people fear and mistrust the Catholic Church, and often enough this seems understandable, for all too frequently what they see is not the Church as it is but a gross distortion. And this caricature of the Church is, on occasion, made worse by individual Catholics who give the impression that there is no room in the Church for diversity of opinion.

Thus on the question of Senator McCarthy, the belief that Catholics as a body were necessarily united behind him has been widespread. And apparently this idea has not been seriously weakened as a result of criticism of Senator McCarthy by the

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editors of this magazine, by the Jesuit weekly *America*, by various individual Catholic leaders and some diocesan papers. Millions of Americans regard Senator McCarthy and his methods as a serious, long-range threat to democracy, and less than half of the voters favor him on the latest Gallup poll. Under the circumstances, the notion that Catholics were solidly lined up behind him in one huge, politically docile bloc was understandably disturbing to those outside the Church.

Both pro- and anti-McCarthy Catholics should therefore welcome the publicity recently given to the remarks by Bishop Bernard J. Sheil of Chicago on Senator McCarthy. The fact that Bishop Sheil's opinions were big news from coast to coast gives one more indication of the strength of the belief that Catholicism and support for Senator McCarthy are inseparable. But no matter what happens in the future, now that Bishop Sheil has spoken no one can reasonably claim that the two necessarily go hand in hand or that one is somehow less a Catholic for being anti-McCarthy.

When Bishop Sheil said that Senator McCarthy's methods represented ineffective anti-Communism, he spoke as one who was vigorously and positively anti-Communist long before it became fashionable. He spoke as one who many years ago brought all his personal prestige to the task of winning religious and freedom-loving men to the cause of moral and social reform, lest the battle go by default to the Communists. He spoke as a Bishop who condemned racial discrimination and segregation in the strongest terms, and as one of the earliest and strongest opponents of anti-Semitism and the Christian Front.

As Bishop Sheil pointed out, because of the nature of his subject he spoke on this issue as a citizen, not as a spokesman for the Catholic Church. He noted that other Catholics take a more kindly view of Senator McCarthy and his effect on the nation. "That is their privilege," the Bishop said, "as it is my privilege to speak as I have." "Time," he said, "will tell which of us is right."

But although the Church takes no position on such a matter of public controversy, the Bishop pointed out that it "does take a position on lies, calumny, the absence of charity and calculated deceit. These things are wrong—even if they are mistakenly thought of as means to a good end. They are morally evil and to call them good or to act as if they were permissible under certain circumstances is itself a monstrous perversion of morality. They are not justified by any cause—least of all by the cause of anti-Communism, which should unite rather than divide all of us in these difficult times."

"UNITED ACTION"

THE great danger in the Indochina situation, the danger which disturbs the French and British, is that our attempt to prevent the Chinese from increasing their aid to the Indochina rebels might have the perverse effect of bringing full-scale Chinese intervention.

As things stand now, we and the Chinese have something of an unspoken understanding. Each of us is aiding one side; each, it may be presumed, fears that the other will increase his assistance to the other side; each may be willing to risk a good deal to keep victory from the other.

The two interested non-belligerent powers, China and the United States, have been enlarging their participation. Now we threaten direct intervention to keep the Chinese out, and the Chinese hint that our intervention could lead to a new Korea. So the two nations are precariously balanced, each edging closer to the center of the tightrope.

What solution is possible? Last week this magazine discussed the military and political situation inside Indochina. Now we are approaching the opening of the Geneva conference, April 26, where the Big Four and China will meet to discuss the crisis in Asia. The French and British are deeply concerned that Mr. Dulles' "united action" declaration would eliminate any possibility of a settlement at that conference.

French popular opinion would sacrifice almost anything to gain an end to the terrible struggle. The French government is less willing to compromise, but obviously is severely restricted by popular sentiment. The British see at least a possibility of an Asian settlement, but with France, they fear the effect of the Dulles declaration. They are so cool to the idea of a pre-conference declaration that they and the French leaked to the press the Dulles' proposal—which was put forward by the United States in confidence.

Mr. Dulles' position is that we must understand the threat in Indochina and take a strong, uncompromising stand, backed by the willingness to take military action, if we expect to impress the Communists at Geneva. Our past experience with Communist aggression weighs heavily in favor of Mr. Dulles. The victories we have won have been the result of just the kind of resolute action Mr. Dulles asks. And the Berlin conference proved that the West is capable of imaginative negotiation from firmly-declared principles. As we see it, danger surely exists in taking a resolute stand; but an even greater danger lies in timidity. Mr. Dulles is risking a great deal, but in the past this kind of risk has paid off.

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Technics and Totalitarianism

MAN IS COMING MORE AND MORE TO PLACE HIS CORPORATE GOOD IN A SECULAR PARADISE, A WORLDLY SALVATION TO BE ACHIEVED BY TECHNOLOGY.

FREDERICK D. WILHELMSEN

A NEW conception of politics is entering the Western world, and is succeeding in replacing every traditional political category. Today it is impossible to understand the nature of modern civilization by appealing to the classical categories of political science: democracy, aristocracy, monarchy, the mixed polity, mob-rule, oligarchy, tyranny—these ancient forms function within modern society, but underlying them are deeper currents of the human spirit, and they define the structure of twentieth-century political and social existence.

Motivating the West in our time is the fever of immanentist eschatology; man is coming more and more to place his corporate good in a secular paradise, a worldly salvation to be achieved within history through instruments conceived in his own mind, and executed by his own hands. The conclusions of Löwith and Voegelin on this issue seem decisive: the divinization of society constitutes "the inner logic of the Western political development from medieval immanentism through humanism, enlightenment, progressivism, liberalism, positivism, into Marxism" (Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*); the state has come to be the representative, not of the common good, but of the secular Idea.

The instrument of the New Jerusalem, fashioned patiently through centuries of Western genius and application, is modern science organized for the purpose of technical mastery over the physical universe. Marx predicted that scientific mastery over nature would soon extend to society itself, and the widespread conviction today that society must be organized according to the dictates of mass production and scientific technology, bears out the Marxist prediction. Power is passing from the hands of statesmen and politicians, and is being concentrated in the hands of the custodians and propagandists of technical efficiency: politics is ceasing to be an exercise in prudence, in morals, and is becoming more and more an exercise in technical efficiency and "know-how." This is the very meaning of the so-called "managerial revolution."

Mr. Wilhelmsen, who teaches at Santa Clara University, is the author of "No Alienated Man," a study of Hilaire Belloc.

The symbolic figures of the age are the physicist, the chemist, the mathematician, the engineer; supporting them are the apostles of the new social science—sociologists, social engineers, psychologists, city planners, educationalists, statisticians, social workers; taking up the rear, following the "mechanized caravans" to use the words of T. S. Eliot, are the propagandists of the new mind: contributing little to science itself, largely ignorant of its inner nature, they nonetheless have offered their services to the wave of the future: secularist philosophers, large masses of half-educated urbanites, rootless cave dwellers of the industrialized city—fashionable, humanitarian, likable, contemptuous of the past, cynical of the present, lyrical of the future. They hold the power, and they exercise it in the name of a mechanized tomorrow.

An understanding of the eschatological drive in modern society, be it Communist or secularist, is absolutely indispensable for any theoretical penetration of the Western crisis. Nonetheless, immanentist eschatology cannot be studied in isolation from the scientific instrument it has seized upon and made its own through the past century. To view technical rationalization as simply one among many neutral forces that have been pressed into the service of political movements aiming at eventual totalitarian domination, would be to miss the point. As innocent as technologized science may appear from an abstract point of view, its full potential is charged with the power to transform society completely, to make civilization over, to alter the fabric of human personality, and even to absorb the physical cosmos within a new world created by the genius of mathematicized science. Because of this, the technologizing of society is the uniquely indispensable instrument for the representatives of any new world order, to be erected beyond the bastions of western liberty.

TOTALITARIAN ideologies aim at the transformation of nature itself, both human and physical. A transfigured universe, a cosmos glorified not on the last day by the Author of Creation, but wrought within history by the new man: this is the ideal.

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The power of science to transform physical nature, to reverse all traditional relationships between man and the world, is so well known it need not be labored here. But the power of science to achieve the atomization of society has thus far been insufficiently penetrated by political theory. Atomization precedes collectivism, and both of them are preliminary phases of every totalitarian movement: the new world can only be built when the old one is destroyed, and when all forces within society are mobilized by the state for the realization of the secular goal of history.

The destruction of vertical hierarchy within society; the transfer of economic power from smaller to larger units; the drying up of folk culture and its replacement by mass propagandized commercial entertainment working for social uniformity; the stripping away of economic freedom, rendering the soul naked and abjectly dependent on the state—all of these preliminary phases of the totalitarian dialectic are the work of technologized science, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to see how they could be achieved by any other instrument.

Modern science is so well adapted for this work of de-humanization that it is sometimes hard to shake off the haunting conviction that totalitarian collectivism is a function of the scientific mind, rather than its master. As mathematicized science attempts to subsume more and more phenomena under increasingly simpler theories, hoping thus to explain the universe through a handful of axioms, so too does the technology created by this science aim at an ever-increasing simplicity of function; multiple units of production are replaced, whenever possible, by single units; multiplicity of trades and occupations decrease as time moves on; embattled workers unite in unions that resist the predatory cupidity of capitalist greed, but they dissolve with hardly a whimper when modern technology eventually gets around to absorbing them within its mammoth organization.

The peasant and homesteader are rendered superfluous; the special skill of the craftsman withers; the small businessman closes up shop because he can compete no longer; hundreds of occupations, traditional ways of life defining dozens of classes for centuries, simply cease to exist, and millions of people, finding their places in society destroyed, their very history annihilated, are absorbed into the masses where their loneliness and resentment of existence make them easy prey for totalitarian mass movements.

Technologized science has proved capable of a destruction hithero undreamed of by the most ambitious and unscrupulous of tyrants: first Nature, then History, and finally Man—all of them become victims of the mechanized tool of the new order. The picture of the "Lion of Hungary," defying the Marxist state, refusing to bow down to the totalitarian demands of the masters of Central Europe, stands as symbol and as type of this tragedy: he entered upon his Calvary a man unbroken, intransigent, magnificent in his proud refusal; he came out and was led into court, less a broken man than a new one: technical science—chemical, biochemical, neurological—transformed him into the image of man dreamed of in all totalitarian movements: pliable, docile, frightened; he had ceased to be himself, and had become the subsisting image of the new mind. A Cardinal of the Church had become his own martyrdom: a human being was destroyed, and a new man was created to take his place. Disintegrate: destroy: create anew! This is the essence of totalitarian modernity.

TECHNOLOGY is thus *the* instrument, not only for social atomization and collectivization, but also the destruction of human personality demanded by all totalitarian programs. But above and beyond all this, there is something still more uniquely proper to the technologized mind that makes it the apt means for the work of destruction and re-creation.

Sir Arthur Eddington stated the goal of modern science when he wrote that "science aims at constructing a world which shall be symbolic of the world of commonplace experience." This symbolic world is constructed, of course, so that the "commonplace" world can be manipulated. But in order to manipulate the world, science needs instruments—machines, and in order to get the machines, science must absorb a good deal of that very world within the new world of industry—technics—where things no longer are what they were, but become technical means to technical ends. It is small wonder that a philosopher of science concluded that, behind the world of scientific theory and technical organization, there rested nothing "but a skeleton structure of symbols."

Initially the world is symbolized by science, but through a dialectic of degradation the sign becomes the thing signified, and what was signified is now only sign. Thus sophomores think the solidity of a massive oak table is a symbol, constructed by sensation, for a system of electrons and neutrons standing behind the table and constituting its true reality. It does little good to tell these people they don't know good oak when they see it. The springs of realism have been so corrupted, they can be restored only by an analysis of the inner nature of science itself.

Natural creation enters the field of mathematicized science only so far as it can be stripped of its non-

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mathematical characteristics, or, more accurately, only so far as these can be symbolized mathematically. By de-naturing the world, it can be systematized, rationalized, transformed, mastered. The secret of total power is the refusal to look things in the face and see them as they are; when man averts his gaze from things, he can reach out and possess them for himself.

Paradox though it may be, it remains a brutal truth: scientific power over a thing is had in proportion to the failure to know the thing as it is. Conversely, a thing is known as it is, when power is relinquished, and the thing is contemplated in its very existence. The dream of total technological control over reality removes mankind from things as they are, empties the soul of the hidden reserves of loyalty to the given, and respect for the other. Thus emptied of decency and realism, the soul is open to the corrupting voice of the totalitarian dream.

WHEN sociologists hunt for the causes of the social boredom and communal apathy threatening to engulf the West today, forming the indispensable condition for the spread of totalitarianism, they would do well to look carefully at the nature of technics and the mind upon which that nature reposes. Technical mastery follows on a dialectic of estrangement from existence, and this dialectic exacts its own price: alienation from things as they are, the suppression of nature, the removal of man from the springs of piety, the destruction of reverence.

Living a corporate existence pushed ever farther from things as they are, modern man has surrounded himself with an ersatz universe of artifacts. Nature is fenced off in parks and preserved against the ravages of a technology that everywhere else threatens the countryside, levelling it with bulldozers, spreading it over with concrete, pulling down fruit orchards, setting up antennae, destroying settled communities and bringing in the restlessness of the factory, the drab uniformity of the housing "project," the cheapness and arrogance of a way of life that leaves in its wake nothing but junk yards full of last year's machinery, now twisted, rusting under the empty sky, discarded in favor of this year's special model for raping existence.

Mankind, cut away (as Christopher Dawson noted recently) from the natural rhythm of the seasons, the benediction of the harvest, and the peace that comes of working with the springs of reality, the peace born of handling life as it ripens under the sun, man—deprived thus of the world created for his labor and play—longs for a new world, and is meantime fed a second-hand life through the mass media of commercial entertainment: the motion picture, the television, the radio, these bring with them the metallic laugh of the comedian, the tension of perpetual political crisis; the sneer of the cynic, the cheapness of manufactured glamor; so mechanized becomes life, so mathematicized the psyche, that feminine beauty itself is "transformed" into a new reality measured according to a statistical calculus that reaches its most amusing absurdity only in beauty contests wherein a girl's charms are judged in advance simply by holding them up to a quantified formula: the contestants might just as well drop out of existence; their *being* is irrelevant to the issue; technologized man is so full of mathematics that he has been taught to fall in love with a set of measurements.

Clearly enough, this mentality is well on the road to a simple inability to make any judgments at all about things as they really are. The senses cannot be trusted anymore; no longer do they fill slowly with the sap of being; shocked periodically by mechanically induced stimuli, they tend to react less and less to reality as it is.

Thus a dream world settles over the West, a world full of the magic of machinery, limited only by the frontiers of a nature that has become the zero of the human consciousness. What academic idealism never succeeded in really doing, has been done for it by technology: modern man, where he is most fully technologized, has ceased to believe in the existence of Nature. That he cannot believe in the existence of God is merely a corollary.

IF the unleashing of the full potential of technics has worked for the decay of reverence, the loss of piety, and the atomization of society so essential to the spread of totalitarianism, it has also furthered that curious and frightening resentment for existence that is inscribed in the heart of totalitarianism. Here is a grim proportion: power and knowledge are equated, and together they spell the dream of the absolute suppression of things as they exist independently of the scientific mind and its dependent creature—the world of technics.

Power comes finally to mean the power to destroy the world of actual existence. Mathematics abstracts from existence, as indicated, and when mathematicized science returns to the world in order to master it, mathematics necessarily gropes like a nearsighted giant through a dark and solid universe: a giant who can fashion and mold the world anew, but who cannot comprehend the hard givenness of the universe he straddles.

As scientists close in on existence, their prey be-

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comes more elusive than ever before. They possess it; they can make it do their will, but something seems to escape the rational pattern; something remains forever just beyond their grasp. As though an impressario could make an actor do everything but act, so too technical genius can make a being do everything but *be*. The world of total technical mastery can come more into, I will not say *being*, but into *use*, only when this world will have ceased to exist. Then power and knowledge will be fused into the absolute unity dreamed of by both the scientific and the totalitarian minds; man will have become the secular god he desires to be, but he will be a god of destruction and slavery, not a God of creation who plays in the world, delighting in "the children of men."

This resentment for existence, for things, men, and institutions as they are, this fever to destroy the world that is, in order to make a new one, runs wildly like a diseased religion through the veins of the West today. The goal can be fulfilled, as Mr. Gilson indicated a number of years ago, only if the last traces of this world are wiped away, perhaps in some cataclysmic Hiroshima. Already men are talking of the exhaustion of the resources of the earth, and of man's impending invasion of outer space. Already the advance guard of cosmic adventurers speak as though our world existed for the sole purpose of a new City, built I know not where, perhaps on the farther shores of history, in a universe that is not, that certainly could only be, provided this our world ceased to exist.

There is only one patriotism today; there is only one civic loyalty: to the world as God gave it. There is only one enemy, and whether he disguises himself as Communist or secularist, his political label is actually irrelevant to the final issue: the enemy is the man who is so full of the spirit of totalitarianism that he refuses to look on this world and see it as it is, as Christian men have always seen it, good in its very being; the enemy is the man who would arrogate to himself the power to destroy, so that he might create.

LEST THE SALT LOSE ITS SAVOR

A New Kind of Catholic School

SISTER MARY EVELYN

THE charge that graduates of Catholic schools do not make the impact upon society their teachers look for has become commonplace. Looking back over the history of the Church we find that there has been nothing comparable to the Catholic school system in the United States. It is staffed by more than 118,000 teachers, of whom more than 99,000 are dedicated Religious. Every one of these men and women will work gladly in all kinds of adverse circumstances. If good will alone could create a Christian culture, the problem would have been solved long ago.

Why, then, since the Catholic educational system has grown so big, are we still so weak? Why do our graduates as a group have so little impact on the world in which they move? Why are they so oblivious of their vocation to penetrate and shape the temporal order by vital Christian action? Why do so many succumb so easily to a way of life antithetical to that taught in school?

To speak of the failure of our educational system to produce results proportionate to the efforts poured into the work does not imply that we overlook the tremendous good that has been done. Mistakes there will always be, and it is easy to see that many of ours in the field of education have been caused by unconquerable circumstances. Despite the Church's remarkable growth, Catholics are still a minority group in this country, and we have had to make many educational concessions merely in order to survive. Whether we have sacrificed too great a good in some of these concessions, for example in conforming to an accrediting pattern which today is finding its arch enemies in some of the very persons who set the pattern, is a question raised by an ever-growing number of Catholic educators. But it is idle to content ourselves with conjecturing about the 'ifs' of educational history. It is far wiser to tackle the problems of our own day, as many are doing, in an effort to find new ways of organization, new improvements in curriculum and textbooks, all designed to increase our educational potential for training the laity to live the Christian life in its fullness. Nothing could be healthier than this dissatisfaction with our efforts and achievements in our challenging task which, in the words of Pope Pius XI, is "to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian." This "true and perfect Christian" whom we train should become the Christian adult dedicating his energies to some vital need of the Church. Let us face the fact that in too many cases this is an unrealized dream; and then ask—why?

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We Catholic teachers give students the theory of the Christian life and the know-how for making a living. Then they pass from us into a world often hostile to Christian principles. The fine theory we have taught lies dormant, while the practical education for making the best of this life brings success in professions or trades. Just at the time when our students need us most to give them the know-how and necessary encouragement for penetrating their milieu with the Christian leaven, we cannot be found. We are too busy for them, because we are bringing up the next crop of Catholics, who with a few notable exceptions will end in very much the same way as the crop which preceded them.

Without being so rash as to propose a simple solution to the very complex problems engaging the attention of some of the best minds of Christendom, and experts in the field of education, I venture an observation on the problem of the relation of the school to the social vocation of the laity; and a suggestion for making this relationship more vital and permanent. The suggestion is given in the confidence that it will provoke someone to come up with a better one, and then to act on it.

IN a large midwestern Catholic high school, a sociology teacher, disturbed by her awareness that education for lay apostolic action often leads down a blind alley, began an experimental program in which students were given an eighteen-hour service assignment in the home, parish, some diocesan agency or Catholic institution. All dressed up with Christian social principles, these students actually had some place to go, and something definite to do. The experiment did more than ease the burden of staff workers in those places serviced by the program. The most gratifying result was in the young students who came back from their assignments fired with zeal. Christian social principle had flowered in an awareness of the Christian social vocation, because knowledge had become operative under the auspices of the school. The result—students who otherwise might have watched their apostolic enthusiasm die for want of nourishment and exercise, escaped the almost universal disaster of falling captive to mediocrity. Instead, they achieved an awareness of their social vocation as a member of the Mystical Body through actually experiencing a role in "restoring all things in Christ."

Such an observation leads to my suggestion. What we need in Catholic education is a new kind of school. Why the cry for a new kind of school when we can hardly maintain those we already have? Simply because we cannot judge an educational problem merely in terms of any school system, however good that system may be in itself. We must keep in view our goal, which is to help the laity become conscious of their incorporation in Christ, and if we find that our means have become outmoded or insufficient for achieving that goal, it is the means that must be changed, or in this case, not changed so much as supplemented.

Let us call this proposed school a School for Social Action, and then define it in terms of its purpose. Such a school is in no way intended to parallel either the conventional high school or college. Indeed, it cannot ever exist without the assistance of both. This school is not meant to supplant but to supplement both the liberal-arts and the general-education curricula. This proposed school is one of specialization; its specific aim would be to form lay leaders and channel their apostolic activities. Thus it is not a school in the ordinary sense of the term. It is a hybrid—part school, part agency. It is a liaison, bridging that ever-widening gap between Christian social principle and action, a gap that so many adult Catholics find insurpassable.

A school-agency of Christian social action organized on a two-year basis would attract a comparatively small group of students, who would be young men and women of unusual insight and uncommon generosity, students able to evaluate their education not only in relation to their own intellectual development, but also in relation to the needs of the society of which they are members. Enrolling in this Social Action School, such students would discover that they are offered there several things which the schools they have previously attended could not offer without violating their own *raison d'être*. Theology, the core of the curriculum, would not be confined to the classroom in this school. It would impregnate the whole schedule, and the very atmosphere. Thus faculty and students would have as their central activity each day, participation in the Mass. They would also be given time to nourish their spiritual life with daily meditation and spiritual reading. A social-action program carried on concurrently with their studies would give the students practice in leading a life of service consistent with the theology learned in class. Each student would divide his time between actual work in which he develops a Christian mentality and the knowledge and techniques necessary for his own apostolic activity, and field work in which he puts into practice the theory he is learning. In the first year he would devote more time to actual study; in the second year, to activity.

OBVIOUSLY, this school would need complete and accurate information regarding the needs of the diocese sponsoring the school. (Such a Social Action School would of necessity be sponsored by the Bishop.) And the school would have to work in close contact with the already established agencies for answering these needs. In this way, the school would be able to

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channel lay leaders to a direct and more permanent kind of Catholic action or activity than is provided by the ordinary high school or college.

Subjects that belong in the curriculum of such a social action school easily suggest themselves. Around the core subject, theology, the student would discover many other subjects finding their place in a true hierarchy of educational values. Some of these subjects would contribute to his intellectual formation in Christian social thought, such as courses in philosophy, papal encyclicals, the doctrine of the Mystical Body. There would be methods courses, too, designed to prepare the student for effective action in his chosen field. Thus a student with a talent for creative writing would study the elements of feature writing and marketing to locate a market for possible written material, while another who planned to contribute service as a volunteer teacher might study methods of using visual aids in catechetical instruction.

Such a curriculum for a school-agency is incomprehensible only if we think of education as concerned exclusively with training the intellect. The Christian must see education as concerned with the whole man. A social action school permeated with this philosophy would show the Church taking an organized educational offensive against the spirit of secularism which is the great modern threat to the Christian way of life. It can hardly be doubted that a social action school-agency is in harmony with the Catholic philosophy of education, when we recall that Pope Pius XI, immediately after defining the immediate end of Christian education in his encyclical on that subject, goes on to say, "For the true Christian must live a supernatural life in Christ . . . and display it in all his actions, 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh'. For precisely this reason, Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social, not with a view of reducing it in any way, in order to elevate, regulate and perfect it in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ."

While a school-agency devoted to specific training for Catholic social action would be far from a cure-all, it seems safe to predict that it would do much more than provide a diocese with a steady flow of volunteer service in places where this is desperately needed. As a coordinating agency this Catholic Social Action School would provide personnel. As a school, it would develop Christian personalities.

Is such a school necessary? Is it desirable? Can the results it hopes to accomplish be achieved within the framework of existing institutions? These are the questions that challenge Catholic educators who each day become more aware of the need to produce a spiritual and intellectual élite able to assume the roles of leadership in a Christian cultural revival.

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Rural Parish In Vermont

JULIE BEDIER

FAIRFIELD is a typical New England community, except that the Puritan background is lacking. As a village, it is strung out in leisurely fashion along several country roads. It has three small stores, one of which also houses the post office; a garage-filling station or two, a creamery, a slaughter house (in the neighboring parish), a school, a neat office for the Town Clerk, a fine large Catholic church and rectory. There are white frame houses, silos and barns, hills and trees and green fields, cows and cows and cows. In autumn the Vermont hills turn to red and gold. In early spring they are suddenly alive with men and youngsters tending sap buckets; with horses pulling tanks of sap on sled runners; with much ado and much smoking of chimneys about the sugar houses. If a man's sap buckets are running over it is a valid reason for missing Mass on Sunday; no sin, not even a venial one.

Most of the people of Fairfield are Catholics; some French, some Irish. It was several generations ago that there was an influx of Catholic Irish settlers in the district. They were farmers, blacksmiths, laborers. They built themselves homes, acquired land, made pastures out of the fair green fields that gave the town its name. They raised huge families of handsome sturdy children. Fairfield citizens still do. Writers and speakers may bewail the "vanishing Irish," but in this rural parish the Irish are not vanishing. Any day in winter you may see crowds of hearty boys and girls hoofing it a mile or two to school through snow, rain, heat or cold. Red cheeks and freckled noses, Irish eyes "put in with a sooty finger," steaming breath, caps down over ears, high boots, red checked mackinaws and big mittens; who cares about the weather? Before and after school there are chores, helping feed the cows, care for the milk, for the maple sap, for the pigs, the chickens. What an education for a child, working alongside father or mother at daily chores, being trained in techniques, in responsibility, in cooperation, in maturity! In the country a big family is an asset, not a liability. Eight, ten, fourteen children make the best social security.

Fairfield youngsters have fun, too. Hunting, trapping, swimming, boating (Fairfield Pond is near at hand,

Julie Bedier is a Maryknoll Sister, author of a number of children's books.

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Lake Champlain not far away), sleighrides, skating, coasting, skiing, picnics, sugar parties, these are some of the good times. But the parish itself is the center of sociability and fun, as well as of religion, and here we meet the pastor.

When Father Francis Candon came to Fairfield as a very young country pastor, he found the church and rectory already built, commodious and suitable. There was a large basement under the church. Father Candon was himself a farm boy, having grown up in rural Vermont, and he was used to working with his hands and using tools. He is also a regional director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, which means that he has a special and definite outlook on matters rural and parochial. As one of the NCRLC priests put it, "A pastor should live for his people, not off them." And "Get the parish people to play together, then they'll work and pray together."

So Farther Candon put on his overalls, and took hold of saw, hammer, paint cans and brushes, and began fixing up the basement. The men of Fairfield took one look and joined him. In no time at all they had a fine large parish hall, a roomy auditorium, with a dance floor, a very good stage with footlights, curtains, dressing rooms, and a piano. At one end of the hall is a model kitchen with white gas range, shelves of big kettles and coffee pots, cupboards of dishes and silver. Somewhere in a side room are sawhorses with table tops which can be mounted on them in a jiffy, providing tables to seat some hundreds of people. Folding chairs are plentiful. Gay checked covers go on the tables, neat curtains hang at the windows (the color is chartreuse, says Father Candon), and walls and shelves are painted in pastel shades. The place has a look of good housekeeping about it, as has the whole property; somebody lives there, and cares about things; somebody who really believes the Lord is in the church, and wants His people about Him.

There are frequent square dances in the parish hall. There are shows, of course, with local talent.

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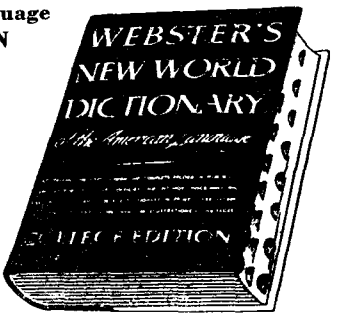

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That given on the feast of Saint Patrick, the parish patron, is perhaps the most important, young men and girls having practiced, under the lively direction of the parish organist, for weeks ahead.

On such civic occasions as the annual Town Meeting, the parish women prepare a good dinner which is served at a small cost to all comers. The Catholic families donate materials and labor, and the proceeds are given to the church. There may be a wedding in the town, with need of a large place for the reception; there may be a meeting, or a state Health Unit with visiting nurses and doctors may come to check up on the children of the district. Father Candon invites all, Catholic or non-Catholic, to use the hall, and without charge. "Only clean it up after you." The parish is a genuine unit, not only in worship, but in friendly fellowship.

Of course, with such a convivial parish life, there are many Catholic marriages. One NCRLC priest in the Middle West was once asked what he did about mixed marriages. "I don't have any," was his reply. "Why not?" "Well, I just give my young people a chance to meet one another." This is what happens at Fairfield. Give young Catholics a chance to meet one another and the results are sure and swift.

There is a very definite and tangible principle held by many pastors, the NCRLC priests generally, and Father Candon in particular. It is summarized somewhat like this: *Every person, Catholic or non-Catholic, within the physical boundaries of a parish, is one of the flock, and is the Pastor's responsibility before God.* "Other sheep I have—" When a priest lives this doctrine, it is immediately evident. Father Candon is friends with everybody, joins everything, is an officer in the local Grange, is prominent in civic affairs. He gets around. Invalid shut-ins can expect him once a month unless they are very ill, then he may come every day. He is the leader of a rural life study group which includes a number of neighboring clergy.

ONE of the problems has been that of getting Sisters to teach religion to the children in summer vacation school. Fairfield has never had a parish school. The children attend the local public school, tax-supported. Most of the children are Catholics, and the teachers are lay women, pious, devout and staunch Catholics, well trained and in love with their work. Some of them have taught the parents of the present generation, and of course they know every family and every child's background with an intimacy undreamed of in a large city school. But a public school is a public school, and the pastors want the children to get some additional training by the Sisters. Parents *do* teach religion at home, and practice it generally. But the vacation school sets the tone and standards

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for the teaching of religion and checks up on what the children know. Last year, after several set-backs in trying to get nuns for these summer classes, the rural pastors of the district went together on a co-operative project in the use of lay people. They arranged ahead of time for eight Catholic college girls to receive special training, during their spring term, to fit them for catechetical work. They were all girls who were obliged to work during the summer, to provide income for their college education. The priests therefore made arrangements for a full summer's employment for each girl, with a salary of twenty-five dollars per week and all expenses paid. Social security, hours of work, living accommodations and the like were all worked out and agreed upon among the priests of the rural study group in advance. There were twelve priests in all, and the girls were to be divided up among the parishes, spending a given number of weeks in each place.

After the summer session, the results were defined and the successes and failures noted. The pastors found that the girls knew their religion. However, (and this is sometimes the case with nuns, too) they often needed to know more theology to give their teaching the proper direction and motivation. Some were weak in pedagogy—how to put the tremendous truths of Christianity into the language of the six-year-old.

Under the head of successes, it was found that the experience was wonderfully good for the lay teachers. It gave them a chance to do something for God, and it trained them in responsibility and in apostolic zeal. The fact that the girls did not wear a religious habit was a slight drawback, since the children have more respect for the nun and for her teaching. However, the girls were good mixers socially, and were well received by the parishioners. Were they better or worse teachers than nuns? The priests found that to be an individual problem. Some nuns had been excellent teachers, others poor. Among the girls, it was the same. It seems that Religious seldom understand the rural environment, or try to adjust their teaching to rural children. However, the pastors would prefer nuns if they could get them.

What is the answer? Perhaps the ideal would be—nuns who are conditioned to rural work, to missionary work, to be apostles among the children of America's farms and little towns; nuns who are not too tied up with rules and regulations suited only to life in a large institution. Another answer might be, lay apostles with strict and definite and lengthy training, such as might be given at the Grail, or in one of the Secular Institutes. Either the nuns come out of the ivory tower, or the laity "get the spirit." An experiment of significance is going on here.

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THE STAGE

THE ARTISTS THEATRE

MR. Robert Hivnor's comedy, "The Ticklish Acrobat"—a brief encounter with which was lately provided by the Artists Theatre—is a work of the deepest charm and imaginative distinction: one which might, I think seriously, sustain the weight of considerable public attention. Wholly personal in his wit, intelligence, and resourceful gaiety of spirit, Mr. Hivnor has made a thoroughly auspicious advent as dramatist; his play is, moreover, an illustrious example of what richness the specifically literary intelligence may yet bring to the most faded and impure of our arts.

"The Ticklish Acrobat" may be described as an intellectual *jeu d'esprit* about that obsessive theme of our national literature: the juxtaposition of the truths of American and European experience. Mr. Hivnor has employed a conventional realistic frame (a remote Dalmatian village, perfectly acceptable on its material terms) but it should not obscure for us the profound impulse to fantasy which controls his imagination. That impulse is (*vide* "Camino Real") neither corrupting nor trivial, and it gives "The Ticklish Acrobat" a point-by-point freshness of statement quite remarkable in contemporary drama. The play's net is thrown wide, and before it closes Mr. Hivnor has caught—obliquely but securely—truths about religion and love, about morality and politics and the impact of societies on each other, which elude most of our bigger, coarser fishermen. In the Artists Theatre production, directed by Herbert Machiz, these filtered through gracefully: the performance was, on the whole, fluid and ingenious, despite some slowness of pace and uncertainty of style. Mr. Hivnor's play, however, demands both publication and another representation.

With this production, its eleventh, the Artists Theatre has achieved a genuine solidity of intention and performance. In contrast to the majority of experimental groups which sprout each year outside the noisy Broadway arcade, their work has shown consistently an eclectic intelligence, enterprise, a positive program. There have been errors, but they have been committed, happily, in the service as well as in the name of freedom. Increasingly, too, their plays have moved from a privacy of reference, a sometimes disabling fragility of feeling, to fullness and strength of statement. A season must be considered successful and distinguished which has brought to public attention three such provocative works as Mr. Hivnor's comedy, Lionel Abel's dryly ironic "The Death of Odysseus," and V. R. Lang's uneven though moving and delicate version of the Orpheus legend, "Fire Exit." Without the Artists Theatre, would we have seen them? It is improbable. Would we be

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the poorer? Decidedly. Quietly, this company has been engaged in that most honorable function—the creation of a milieu for theater—and one might wish for them a less niggardly popular and critical response than has been their (so far) disappointing lot.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

GRACE IS EVERYWHERE

PERHAPS of all of great modern novels the one readers would consider the most unlikely movie material is Georges Bernanos' *The Diary of a Country Priest*. This extraordinary story, written in the form of a diary of a young priest whose goodness and zeal are greater than his ability to handle the people of his unresponsive parish, concentrates more on thought and soul-searching than on action. Soul-searching, while fascinating to read about, is not ordinarily the stuff of lively cinema. And so Producer Leon Carre and Director Robert Bresson should get a special award for their courage in making this unusual French film and for their success in sticking so close to Bernanos' themes and visualizing the rich spirit of the book.

Theirs was no easy task. "The Diary of a Country Priest" is no "Going My Way" with fun-loving and lovable priests and a comfortably sentimental brand of Catholicism. Its hero, an almost incredibly naive young priest who lacks the authority and physical strength for the battle into which he rushes without sparing himself, lives in the austere village of Ambricourt, whose congregation offers him little encouragement and even misunderstands his illness, which they mistake for alcoholism. He refuses to compromise with evil, or even to speak up to save himself. Consequently his flock, who are willing to do God's will as long as it doesn't interfere with their own, consider him a meddling boobie—especially the inhabitants of the grand chateau in whose affairs the saintly young priest gets involved.

Claude Laydu plays this lead role with great understanding of the meaning of goodness and suffering, and he is surrounded by a fine supporting cast. But Director Bresson, more than the players, deserves credit for the moving effect of this film. Its beautiful photography and the stunning use of close-ups and scenery to heighten the mood are frequently quite exciting. Needless to say, "The Diary of a Country Priest" is somber film fare. Because of its close adherence to Bernanos and the diary form, it is rather episodic, and while viewing it you may find this series of short scenes tiring and overly grim—but the total effect is that of an ennobling experience. The picture has English subtitles and

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parts of the diary are read aloud in English. Although you may agree that this young priest behaved in a manner that was childish at times, you have a feeling after his death and his final "All is grace" that you have been watching the life of a saint. "The Diary of a Country Priest" is one of those rare films that are not to be missed.

ANOTHER great novel that seemed quite unlikely as the source of a movie (although for much different reasons) is *The Pickwick Papers*. Dickens' lengthy, episodic story of the adventures of a group of bachelors who set out to study human nature (and be of service to it) seemed to have too many characters, too much of plot and too many little incidents that couldn't be neglected to be crowded into one movie. Well, the English have done it; and while the picture is long and changes were made, the finished film is the very embodiment of good cheer and hilarious nineteenth-century spirits.

Noel Langley, who wrote the script and directed this large and flavorful cast, deserves greatest applause. He jelled the rambling plot into a joyful whole that bubbles with satire and wit.

James Hayter plays Pickwick as if he were the very man Dickens had in mind. Innocence and twinkling humor and social indignation are rolled into one in this pot-bellied, lovable Mr. Pickwick, who leads his friends into and out of hilarious mishaps. It would be impossible in this short space to give full credit to all the players who support Hayter so admirably, but mention must be made of Nigel Patrick as Jingle, whose clipped speech is as famous as his lack of scruples, Kathleen Harrison as Rachel Wardle, toothy Joyce Grenfell as Mrs. Leo Hunter, Hermione Gingold as the schoolmistress, Harry Fowler as Pickwick's devoted Sam Weller, and Hermione Baddeley as Mrs. Bardell, who, you will remember, sues the unworldly hero for breach of promise.

The characters as well as the incidents make this English version of "The Pickwick Papers" a delight. But the good costumes and sets help, and let's give one Charles Dickens his due too. Here's a treat for young and old whether they are familiar with the story or not. I, for one, could go right back and see it again.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

PHILOSOPHY cannot be separated from its own history, nor can a sharp distinction be made between the creative philosopher and the historian of philosophy. No matter how original it may be, any theoretical analysis implies at least an attitude toward the history of theory. And conversely, since the philosophic past exists in a new relationship when it is seen from the present, the history of philosophy has its own creative aspect—one which is too often ignored by the historians themselves.

It is one of the merits of James Collins' new book that it gives explicit recognition to this fact. And although the book is intended to be a text for university students, it makes a conscious search for the present truth at the same time as it records the past. Precisely because of the scope of his method, Collins is here faced with a tremendous task: not only of describing a vast and crucial area of Western intellectual history, but of criticizing and integrating it from his own point of view as well. The extent to which he succeeds in this task is a measure of his book's importance for modern Catholic education and philosophy.

The description of the thought of a philosopher, especially one with whom you do not agree, is always tremendously difficult. It requires a certain intellectual charity, a willingness to read a man within his own terms even if you do disagree with those terms. Exposition—or criticism—which upbraids a thinker for not living up to someone else's method is practically worthless. Criticism can only begin after an honest attempt has been made to participate within the terms of a man's thought, even if the end result may be the criticism of those terms.

The result when such intellectual charity is lacking can be seen in the work of so celebrated a writer as Hans Reichenbach. In *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*, one of the most important works of modern logical positivism, Reichenbach begins with a quotation from Hegel. It has all of the awesome abstruseness of Hegel's technical language and particular point of view. But

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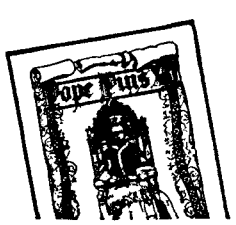

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Reichenbach refuses to make the effort to discover what Hegel means and why he phrased it in such language. Rather he pokes fun at the quotation, which is easy enough, but which, if carried to its logical conclusion, would make it impossible to learn from anyone with whom you did not agree. Such arrogance is not the special preserve of logical positivists (although they often seem eager to give this impression). It is a danger which constantly threatens any point of view, and it is especially menacing for one who holds to a "closed" religious or philosophical system. Thus, the Marxist may dismiss all but Marx as "petit-bourgeois," and the Freudian all but Freud as "neurotic"—and the Thomist all but Thomas as "anti-intellectual."

Collins' work avoids this. A positive act of intellectual charity distinguishes *A History of Modern European Philosophy* and provides its most significant contribution to Catholic thought. And Collins accomplishes this act within the framework of an announced Thomism. He himself makes an excellent formulation of his approach: "Now the first task in the history of philosophy is to gain an accurate and sympathetic understanding of the methods, general standpoints, and special doctrines of the great thinkers in a given age. *Nothing can replace a careful, enlightened study of the sources, with the purpose of sharing in the outlook of these men through an act of historical insight.*" [My italics.]

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historical insight, can we have a history of philosophy.

In the other areas of his task—critical evaluation and historical integration—I do not think that Collins succeeds as admirably as he does in his exposition. There are perhaps two reasons for this. One was beyond his control: he was writing a textbook. The other is that he does not make that synthesis toward which his method moves.

In this History, Collins is not writing a reference book, but a text for college use. Understandably, he places a great deal of emphasis on exposition, and less on criticism. Yet I cannot help but wish that the proportion had been somewhat less severe, because what criticism there is lives up to the high standards which the author had set in his previous books on Kierkegaard and existentialism.

The failure to attempt a more thorough synthesis seems to me the more serious lack. Collins does not spell out the meaning of the whole development of modern philosophy as it emerges through his exposition of particular modern thinkers. One reason for this is, I think, his justifiable hesitation to be drawn into simple historicism. He writes in the Introductory Chapter: "Historicism has a grasp on a partial truth; man is a temporal reasoning being, all of whose discoveries are made in some particular historical situation. But it does not follow that all truths discovered *in* some particular time are relevant and valid *only* for that period. . . ."

This attitude toward pure historicist theory is, I think, a sound one. Yet I do not think that Collins would have fallen into the error of historicism by making the interrelatedness, the common culture, of these philosophers more clear.

The work of Etienne Gilson is an excellent case in point. In books like *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* Gilson manages to attain a certain thematic sweep which not only integrates the material to his own point of view but also to the development of philosophy as a whole. When Collins treats Descartes (and he acknowledges his

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debt to Gilson), he lacks an explicit statement of such a vision.

It is important to note, however, that my qualification concerns the lack of an *explicit* integration along historical lines. The important thing is that Collins' method—his willingness to take the great pains which historical insight requires—contains the thematic sweep as its sum whether or not it is finally added up.

By taking each individual thinker seriously, by studying him carefully in terms of the particular problem which he saw, his method, and the influences upon him, Collins may not achieve a Gilson-like hypothesis about the unitary nature of philosophic development, but he most assuredly does achieve a documentation. And here we return to the initial point: that philosophy cannot be separated from its own history.

It is a commonplace to think of the history of philosophy as a history of contradictions. The intellectual past is seen as fractions and surds. Gilson and others (Karl Jaspers, for instance) have developed a general thesis which would see these apparent contradictions as actually the voices of a dialogue. If Collins does not say this in so many words, his very painstaking manner is an example of the continuation of that dialogue because it constantly enables us to see the relevance of a Kant or a Hume—or a Hegel or a Berkeley.

And this is, I think, of crucial importance in the present. For logical positivism (which is the most fashionable, if not the dominant, school of contemporary American philosophy) often does make a se-

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vere disjunction and separates itself from the philosophical past. The work of Reichenbach to which I referred before is a famous example of this tendency. At times there is an almost messianic pretension in his insistence upon the value of the new, scientific philosophy and the obsolescence of all that went before Max Planck or Einstein.

In this sense, Collins' textbook, his careful scholarship (perhaps his very caution with regard to general hypotheses) is truly creative. For this detailed working of the analytic understanding is perhaps even more impressive than the generalizations of a synthesis. It is here, in his insistence upon accuracy *and* relevance when he treats the past, that he has succeeded in making a major contribution to Catholic thought in America. His explicit synthesis of modern thought will be worth the waiting.

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When the germ of the idea was conceived, it was discarded as being too preposterous. But, since "Anyone but a damn' fool" (in Churchill's words) would know that Sicily would be the logical invasion point, possibly only a completely preposterous plan of deception could succeed. And so the man who never was began to be.

The strongest point in the book is its careful, calm detailing of the footwork involved in the preparation. There is no parallel in the violent action of fiction, nor even in the exploits of the famous Yeo-Thomas. The obtaining of a suitable body, the gathering of proper and authentic odds and ends for the Major's pockets, the writing of the letters to be found with the body—these were the jobs of desk-bound men who depended upon the unique abilities they had. The plan was conceived with the knowledge that the neutral Spanish would give German Intelligence any information they received, and it was built on an attempt to understand what would satisfy those who would examine the body and its effects. And the plan, carried out with an absolute minimum of glamor and personal danger, succeeded.

In this detailing may also lie a weakness, either of the book or the reviewer, for the plot involves such heady stuff that one could wish for more sidelights on the people involved, more discussion of the plans outlined and discarded, more of the highlighting and shadowing that puts depth in a story. There are faults in the telling as well, developments which are not clearly explained and points which are introduced before their logical spot. But they seem the faults of a man whose urge is more to tell the story than to write a book.

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Don" anathematized by Hilaire Belloc.

Shane Leslie's memoir opens up the whole question of Catholic historical writing, more especially in the perilous English field. The first blows to the Protestant myth were dealt by the factual, unspectacular Lingard and by the radical Cobbett, who, though a Protestant, saw through the economics of the new order. However, the real Catholic counter-revolution began with Gasquet and continued with Belloc and his followers. Often wild, often wrong-headed, it nevertheless made progress. Most modern historians are far more friendly to the Church than their counterparts in the age of Macaulay.

It is a striking change. There is no doubt that Gasquet and Belloc were far from being first-rate historians. Yet their influence has proved important, even decisive. Why? Shane Leslie gives us one reason. Whatever his faults, Gasquet did bring the documents to light, and the story they tell cannot be dismissed. But there is, I believe, a second reason, and the biographer's kindly minimization of the Coulton controversy somewhat obscures it.

These authors, even at their worst, were always challenging. They provoked answers. Thrusts and counter-thrusts darted back and forth over the years and set people thinking. There were few conclusive battles, of course. The only really crushing victory was scored by a Jesuit, Father Thurston, and even this was a purely local action concerned with the reliability of a certain book. All the protagonists are now dead, and honors are divided; but history can never look quite the same as before. Nor, indeed, can the anti-Catholic historians. We read Macaulay and Froude as literature rather than history, and we recall with a shudder the last years of Dr. Coulton himself, transformed by his obsession into such an appalling bore that he actually had to pay to get some of his outpourings into print.

Abbot Gasquet did not only write history, he helped to make it. Perhaps he would have written it better if the phase of making it had come first. To begin with, he showed

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a sudden flair for ecclesiastical politics. An Italian Cardinal paid a visit to England and convinced Leo XIII that the Anglican Church had become almost Catholic. The Pope formed a plan to write to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York inviting their submission! Gasquet wisely and courageously intervened. There followed the famous investigation of Anglican orders, which, in 1895, were pronounced invalid.

The First World War propelled Gasquet, now a Cardinal, into the surprising position of unofficial ambassador. He lived at Rome as the sole spokesman for England within the Vatican. Teutonic archbishops were propagating the German version of affairs with little or no contradiction. The Pope was sincerely neutral, but the Sacred College—preoccupied with French atheism, English indifference, and German respect for order—inclined toward the Central Powers. Gasquet took on the thankless job of countering enemy reports and building up contacts between his own country and the Papal organization. Though he could not swing the balance the other way, he at least succeeded in confirming the neutrality of the Pope.

The book which Shane Leslie has compiled reads a trifle scrappily. Yet perhaps that is how it ought to read. Gasquet's life was a long one: he talked to witnesses of the French Revolution, and died during the Hoover administration. In such a span it was only natural that there should be starts and stops, gallant undertakings and imperfect achievements, fluctuations in health, changes in the demands of superiors. Because of certain sins of omission, we cannot set Gasquet as high as we should like. But it is good to be assured that we can set him high.

REVIEWERS

Michael Harrington is a critic and political writer who frequently contributes to this magazine.

Catherine Spurr is a member of the business staff of The Commonweal.

Geoffrey Ashe writes on literary matters and on social problems for magazines in this country and in Great Britain.

Personal

April 30 is publication date for *Catholicism in America,* the book version of articles which ran under that general title in The Commonweal last year. The book, which runs to 242 pages, is published by Harcourt, Brace and Company and sells for $3.75. It is indicative of popular interest in the general subject that no less than a dozen different publishers, Catholic and secular, bid for book rights to the series long before the last article appeared in the magazine. Many Commonweal readers expressed a desire to have the essays in a more permanent form.

The series was born as an idea when one of the editors was visiting Paris. He happened to see a lecture program sponsored by a French Catholic organization. For one lecture, entitled "Catholicism in America," he noticed, reservations were required. Why? he asked. The answer was that there was such intense interest in the subject that an overflow crowd could be expected. If the French are that interested in American Catholicism, the editor decided, it is surely worth a series of articles in The Commonweal. A group of writers was rounded up and the series began in The Commonweal a few months later.

All but two of the eighteen authors of *Catholicism in America* are Catholic laymen. Reinhold Niebuhr and Will Herberg write, respectively, as a Protestant and a Jew looking at their Catholic fellow-citizens. George N. Shuster has written a preface to the book. The other writers are: John J. Kane, Julian Pleasants, Joseph M. Duffy, Jr., Ed Marciniak, Ed Willock, Joseph E. Cunneen, Henry Rago, Dan Herr, Maurice Lavanoux, Walter Kerr, Daniel F. Cleary (who died suddenly in December), Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, James O'Gara, John Cogley and William P. Clancy.

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NEXT WEEK: A CRITIQUE OF

United States Foreign Policy

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